



Case Study

Offline Sleeve Coding



Puredrive Fine Foods Goes Up a Gear with a High-Speed Sleeve Coding System



Part of the Dutch owned Zwanenberg Food Group, Puredrive Fine Foods produces cooked sausages, meatballs and formed meat products at its Corby factory. Around 100,000 sleeved products leave the factory each week destined for retailers, food service companies and other food manufacturers.

Sleeve coding bottleneck

The company had previously been using an older sleeve coding system with thermal transfer printer as well as a foot operated hot foil printer to print single-line use-by date codes on a variety of sleeve types and sizes for its different product lines.

When planning for Christmas production, it was clear that this system would be unable to handle the number of sleeves that needed coding each day. As Victoria Carlton, Packing Room and Despatch Manager, explains: "With our existing equipment, we could print date codes on around thirty sleeves per minute. Even with an operator on the machine for a full twelve-hour shift, six days per week, we still would not be able to achieve our target."

With the existing coding equipment no longer viable, Puredrive purchased the udaFORMAXX off-line coding system from PrintSafe.

The udaFORMAXX is a standalone machine that lets manufacturers code sleeves or cartons off-line ready for production. The semi-automatic system can print as many as 500 sleeves per minute. The machine takes flat-form sleeves from a stack, accurately prints the date codes and places the coded sleeve neatly into another stack ready for collection. The system can be integrated with a choice of printing or labelling technologies. These include continuous inkjet, thermal inkjet, thermal transfer, spot labellers and print and apply label applicators.

Throughput increased from 30 to 300 per minute

Initial testing of five different sleeves proved that the udaFORMAXX, with alphaJET mondo inkjet coder, could increase Puredrive's throughput from the previous thirty per minute to between 300 and 500 per minute.

Carlton says, "These initial numbers represented a huge potential cost saving for us. Not only this, it would ensure that we could confidently fulfil our projected orders. Looking at it simply, we would be able to code in just one hour what had previously taken a full twelve-hour shift."

A visit to another food producer, coincidentally on the same industrial estate, already using a udaFORMAXX sleeve date coding machine cemented the ROI justification.

Accurate codes guaranteed

Within just a few days of installation, the offline coding system had proved its worth. "As far as coding was concerned, Christmas



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production was a completely different story from the previous year. When you think that we were able to print all of the sleeves needed for the day's production in a matter of hours just ahead of time. This removed any potential hold-ups and freed operating resource for other areas of production and packing ,” says Carlton.

“With the accurate print positioning provided by the sleeve coding system, we were able to guarantee high quality codes. This meant practically zero wastage – which was another cost saving.”

Easy to use

One of the key requirements for Puredrive was that the machine should be very easy for operators to set up and use.

“Just one look at the system and you can see that it has been well designed and built. It is very easy to make adjustments for different sleeve sizes. The touchscreen on the inkjet is also a benefit. We can store all of our messages

ahead of time and just need to select a couple of icons on the screen to be ready for printing,” says Carlton.

Cost-saving and operational benefits

Carlton concludes: “We are really impressed by the sleeve coding system and the cost-saving and operational benefits. PrintSafe worked quickly to get a system in place for us and have continued to support us allowing us to focus on delivering high quality products to our customers.”



Fast Facts

- Puredrive Fine Foods produces around 100,000 sleeved products each week
- Previous coding system could only handle around 30 sleeves per minute
- PrintSafe supplied udaFORMAXX sleeve feeder with integrated alphaJET mondo inkjet
- Coding speed increased to between 300 and 500 per minute
- Christmas production volumes handled with ease
- Touchscreen inkjet makes it easy to store and select required messages
- Accurate print placement each time

About PrintSafe

PrintSafe is a coding and marking specialist serving manufacturing companies throughout the UK and Ireland with a comprehensive range of coding equipment and after-sales services. PrintSafe is the UK distributor for KBA-Metronic GmbH. As the UK specialist in offline coding and labelling systems, PrintSafe has helped hundreds of customers to cut the cost of handling products and packaging that cannot be coded or labelled within main production.

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